

Can't be done, can it?

Over half a century, Mr. Ashburn, the Phillies' Hall of Fame outfielder and longtime broadcaster who died suddenly yesterday, became woven deep into the fabric of a tough but loyal town. The threads running through his career were bedrock decency, consistency, dry wit and, of course, dashing athletic skill.

When Mr. Ashburn had a heart attack in a New York hotel after broadcasting a ball game between two teams for which he played, the Phils and Mets, Philadelphians lost someone who helped define their sense of their town.

He was, in the city's high accolade, a "regular guy," a man who knew how to win and how to struggle, how to laugh and how to grieve, whom the rest of the nation never quite appreciated the way it should.

As a player, the Nebraskan everyone called Whitey was one of his generation's best, but often overlooked on the national stage. He was an artist of the single in a game where home-run hitters hog the spotlight. A Philadelphian in an era when New York's Golden Age of Sport featured three legends playing his position: Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle and Duke Snider.

He didn't fret about that. He just kept doing with meticulous class all the little things—fielding his position, bunting runners along—that make winning possible.

Fitting it was that he saved the National League pennant for the fabled 1950 Whiz Kids with a defensive play in the season's last game.

Fitting it was also that baseball finally came to its senses and put him into its Hall of Fame in 1995—though sadly too late for him to savor the moment with his dead father, twin sister and daughter. At his induction, he shared the podium graciously with a more talented but less lovable Phillie, Mike Schmidt. Mr. Schmidt himself, scanning the sea of red caps and the record 200 chartered buses invading Cooperstown that day, observed that 'twas Whitey who'd lured most of them.

In the broadcast booth, as on the field, Mr. Ashburn's work featured a Philadelphia-friendly mix: loyalty, warmth, honesty and understated humor that refused to take himself or anyone else too seriously.

He was never the smoothest caller of a game, but he knew how to share a microphone, how to sum up excellence or disaster in one sage phrase, and how to put friendliness into the "Welcome to Minnie from Royersford, celebrating her 90th today at the Vet" messages it was his daily lot to read.

A great ballplayer speaks to that piece inside people that yearns for heroes. A baseball broadcaster, more than any other sports announcer, becomes a piece of a city's daily conversation, a reliable bard whose word pictures fuel backyard debates and spice long commutes.

Philadelphia was graced to have Richie Ashburn in those two roles over five decades. Whitey, you'll be missed.

#### RECOGNITION OF SOLANO COUNTY'S FIRST ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO SENIORS COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

#### HON. VIC FAZIO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 1997

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the first annual tribute to seniors community celebration in Solano

County, CA, which will take place on September 24, 1997.

This all-day event will include speakers, workshops, and entertainment, as well as educational offerings. It will also incorporate the annual health fair. It will be the first event of its kind to address fully the issues and interest of seniors throughout Solano County. Seniors and members of the Vacaville community have come together to create this event, which will serve to benefit all the citizens of Solano regardless of age.

We should also make note of the positive effects that can occur when our citizens join with their elected leaders, be they local, regional or national, and with shared visions, accomplish that which we all strive for: A community spirit that thrives and makes us proud.

In closing, I would like to commend the distinguished members of the Tribute to Seniors Committee. The committee is comprised of the following individuals, all of whom have dedicated their time and energy to the success of this special event: Chairman Charles Conti, Diana Barney, Kristen Delaplane, Lynn Kessler, Dorothy Locke, and Jim Tooke.

Congratulations to everyone who is working to make this day a caring and sharing celebration.

#### SHAFTER COTTON RESEARCH STATION: A CALIFORNIA FARMING LANDMARK

#### HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 1997

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, the Shafter Cotton Research Center, in Shafter, CA, is celebrating 75 years of research for California cotton production and this month becomes a State registered landmark. The designation recognizes the important research contributions this center has made to the California cotton industry. We also recognize the historic relationship between California cotton growers, the University of California, Kern County and the U.S. Department of Agriculture that has made the Shafter Cotton Research Center so successful.

This center got its start in 1922 and has been in the forefront of efforts to buck common wisdom ever since. At that time, many people in the cotton industry thought California was too far from the mills in the eastern United States for California to ever become a cotton powerhouse. The work done in cooperation between Federal, State and local government and private industry that led to the ACALA cotton variety developed here proved the skeptics wrong. Since then, work on the 120-acre center grounds has produced innovations in labor-saving mechanization, pest control and other farm practices.

The California industry made possible by the Shafter Cotton Research Center contributes over \$1 billion to the California farm economy and \$340 million to Kern County. California cotton's quality is so well known around the world that 80 percent of the cotton grown here goes into export markets.

The Shafter Cotton Research Center continues to lead in cotton industry research. Today's research is looking into ways to reduce tillage in cotton production, potentially valuable

to farmers faced with clean air requirements to reduce airborne dust. The center is also doing work on sophisticated means of monitoring crop health, means which could allow farmers to reduce applications of pesticides and other chemicals. It is still a cooperative venture. Under an agreement struck in 1991, the Department of Agriculture, the University of California, Kern County and the cotton industry are cooperating to keep the research center in operation so that this unique facility will continue to produce cutting-edge technology for the California cotton farmer of the 21st century.

The Shafter Cotton Research Center is a landmark in California to the creative energies of generations of farmers and scientists because of the way everyone has rolled up their 100 percent cotton sleeves to work together. We recognize that cooperation's key role in the center's historic and future importance.

#### THE GREATER MIAMI COMMITTEE FOR UNICEF AWARDS LISSETTE AND WILLY CHIRINO FOR THEIR EXTENSIVE LABOR WITH DESTITUTE CHILDREN

#### HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 1997

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to one of Miami's most outstanding organizations. The Greater Miami Committee for UNICEF has saved the lives of scores of children in the south Florida area and throughout the world. Providing emergency assistance by equipping poor and starving children with primary and necessary healthcare by furnishing them with basic education are among the many ways in which this organization has come to the rescue of these underprivileged children; the children of our world.

The Greater Miami Committee for UNICEF has always advocated and devoted itself to fighting for the adequate protection of children and their inalienable rights. The members are always eager to award opportunities to destitute children, with whatever means necessary, to help them to develop and reach their full potential in life.

This year, this commendable organization has chosen to present its award to La Fundacion Willy Chirino. Willy and Lissette Chirino, the founders and extensive laborers of this organization, have unselfishly and lovingly opened their hearts and their arms to the afflicted children facing hardships. As a result, this couple has eased heavy burdens of these poor children and has embraced them with the gifts of love and hope; gifts which these children had never previously experienced.

These notable organizations will continue to reach their hands out to these unfortunate children, lift them up and light their paths for a much better and brighter road ahead. I am confident that my colleagues will join me today in congratulating and celebrating the exceptional work and effort that both The Greater Miami Committee for UNICEF and La Fundacion Willy Chirino have done for the impoverished children of south Florida and throughout the world.